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Buxton eyes goal of razing toxic mill

By **AMY WELCH**
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BUXTON — Town officials are meeting with representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today to discuss the future of the Rogers Fibre Mill.

The EPA has found several hazardous chemicals in the old mill building, including asbestos, benzene, copper and zinc, said Selectman Bob Brandenstein. In order to get to those chemicals and remove them, the EPA will have to take down part of the building as well, he said.

How much it will take down and when it will start is the subject of today's meeting, according to Brandenstein.

The EPA has committed more than \$900,000 to the project, and the town is also pursuing a \$10,000 grant to study the rest of the project, Brandenstein said. The amount of work the town will have to do depends on how much of the mill is demolished by the EPA.

Brandenstein said the town will have to pick up where the EPA leaves off, and must make a decision on what to do with the land once the building is gone. A park or a place to launch canoes have been considered as options.

A public meeting on the study grant will take place at 7 p.m. tonight at the Buxton Town Hall.

The mill, on the banks of the Saco River, produced fiberboard from 1917 until 1980 and has been virtually abandoned since then. In addition to the hazardous chemicals stored in the building, the walls started to cave in during January's ice storm. The town has considered the building a hazard for years, but residents have twice voted against foreclosing on it because they did not want the responsibility of demolishing the building.

The building is owned by Patrick Canonica, a developer from Massachusetts.

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